FIRST COMICS
FEB. $1.25
NO. 19
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WARP
THE FINAL BATTLE!

warped words

%FIRST COMICS,
1014 DAVIS STREET, EVANSTON, ILLINOIS 60201

O.K. I know that a lot of people turn to the letters page before they read the story. I do it myself.

But this time, it's a mistake. Please read the story first. We'll still be here when you get back.

Well, that's it, folks. The Big Finish. This isn't the finish for **Warp** or for these characters, but, having come full circle, this seems like a convenient point to drop off.

There used to be only one reason for cancelling a comic book: low sales. Today, there are others — the creative team wants to move on to other things, and the publisher can't find anyone else who can give the feature the appropriate vision. Or the publisher feels there isn't all that much potential in the series and would rather devote that time and energy to something new.

In the case of Warp, this last reason is true. But there's a lot of the first reason as well. Sales on Warp are not strong enough to justify continuing the series at this time.

We would rather devote that time and energy to our newest projects — to the return of **Nexus** and the **Badger,** to the expansion of our graphic novels line, to **Dynamo Joe** and to our mysterious new series tentatively set to premiere in February or March.

We could continue to publish the book and simply glut the stands with more titles, but we don't want to extend a project beyond its own natural life-span simply for the sake of grabbing as much shelf-space as inhumanly possible.

So, as I said, this is the last issue of **Warp.** *For the time being.*

Progress on the Warp *movie* continues — we've read the latest draft of the screenplay and we've heard about their casting choices — and when the Warp movie is released, at the very least First Comics will be doing the comics adaptation. As it stands right now, the movie will be more than simply a rehash of the first nine issues of this comic book, and it is far less of a parody of comic books than the original plays. It will make for a great comics adaptation.

And, of course, at that time we will consider bringing back the Warp comic book as well. Although in these days of creator's rights, it is possible the Warp creators will choose to have another publisher handle the original stories well before the movie is released. That's fine by us — that's what creator's rights are all about. We're already committed to the movie adaptation.

Peter Gillis has plans for the original characters — Outrider and the others-he created for use in the Warp series. He's written a brilliant treatment, and we think it is fantastic. I hope we can get to it real soon; we'll be doing our very best.

A lot of people knocked themselves out for this book: Peter, **Jerry Bingham, Bill Willingham, George Freeman, Marc Silvestry, Howard Chaykin, Mike Gustovich, Bruce Patterson, Lenin Delsol, Jack C. Harris, Steve Ditko.** Not to mention a host of letterers and colorists and staff people. Not to mention editor **Rick Oliver,** who in my humble opinion has proven himself to be one of the finest new editors in the business.

Warp also marked the professional debut of **John Ostrander,** and given the quality of his work on **Grimjack** and **Starslayer,** for that alone we are extremely thankful.

But above all, we're thankful for the support you have given us. In spite of what we regard as fairly low sales, **Warp** outsold a great, great many comics on the direct sales market. That says a lot, because I regard Warp as the most newsstand-oriented book in the First line. So we know a lot of you are out there, and most of you will be disappointed by our cancelling this book.

That's the toughest part.

Peter will be back with the **Black Flame** (in **Starslayer**) and, before too long, his spin-off series. He's also involved in a slew of titles at Marvel, as is artist **Mike Gustovich.** And we're here, every month, with a whole bunch of comics that are really unlike anything else on the stands.

We'll see you everywhere.

Count on it.

— Mike Gold

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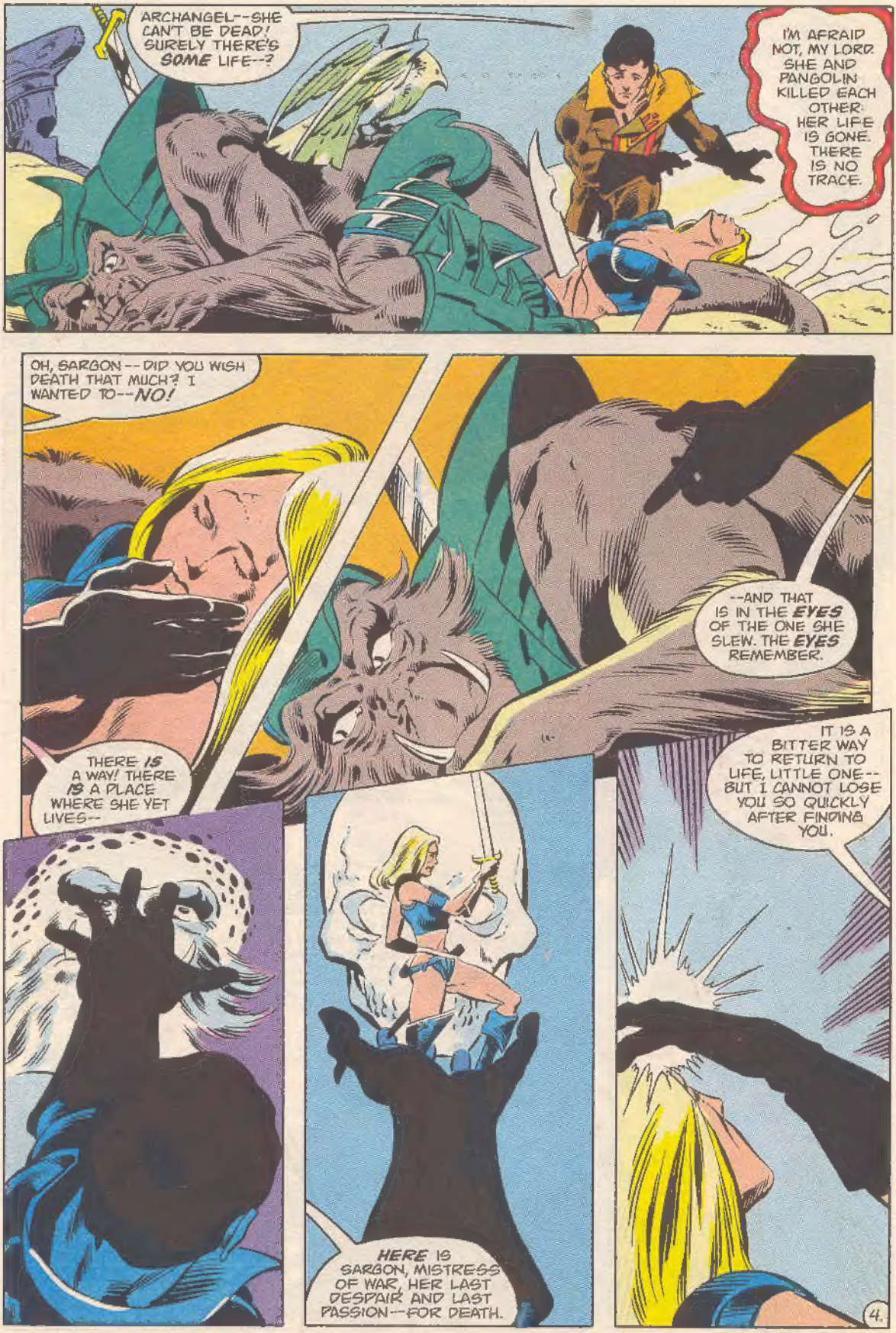
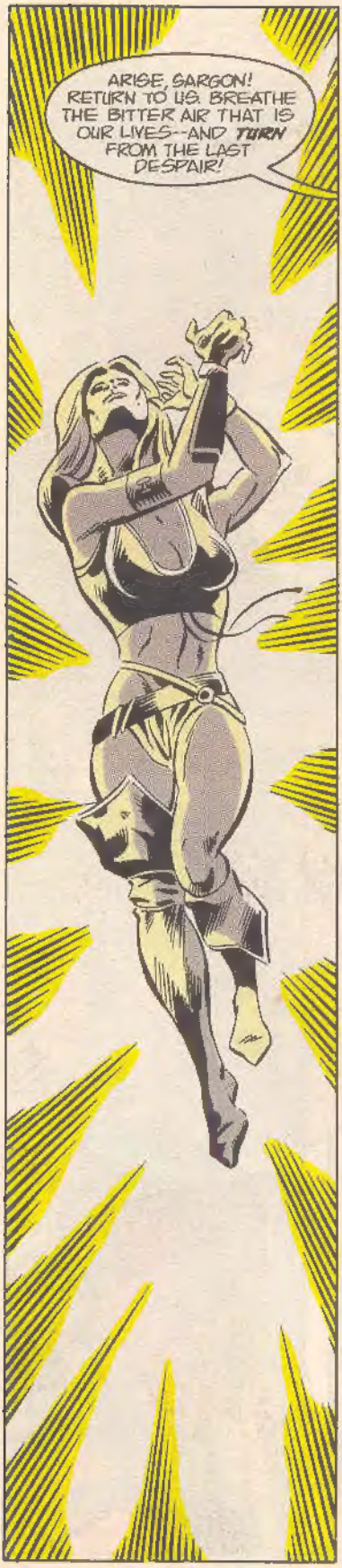
A FIRST COMICS PUBLISHING PRODUCTION

WARP
The FINAL BATTLE
IT IS OVER, MY BROTHER CHAOS. IT IS OVER, AND NOW NOTHING WILL BE THE SAME AGAIN.
PETER B. GILLIS · STORY
MIKE GUSTOVICH · ART
ERIC SHANOWER · LETTERS
JANICE COHEN · COLORS
RICK OLIVER · EDITOR
BASED ON CHARACTERS AND CONCEPTS CREATED BY STUART GORDON AND BURY ST. EDMUND

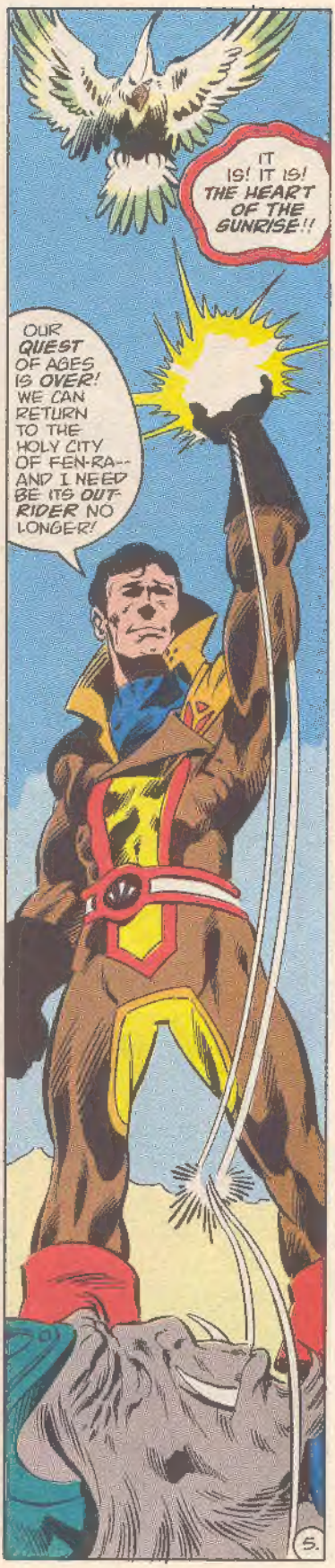
OOH, MY ACHING--WHAT HAPPENED?
DON'T WORRY--YOU WERE TRYING TO OPEN THE GATE TO HELL AND DESTROY THE CITY OF CYNOSURE HERE AND THE ENTIRE MULTI-VERSE WITH IT. BUT I STOPPED YOU, SO IT'S ALL RIGHT.
CUMULUS--YOU LOOK DIFFERENT. WHAT--
I AM DIFFERENT. HERE--LET ME HELP YOU UP.
I LOVE YOU AS A BROTHER, CHAOS; BUT YOU REALLY SHOULDN'T DO THAT AGAIN--
CUMULUS, NO! DON'T!
--AND SO I THINK A LITTLE BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION IS IN ORDER!
I COULD CRUSH YOUR SKULL LIKE AN EGGSHELL--
--AND I THINK YOU SHOULD REMEMBER THAT VERY CLEARLY.

AND NOW THAT THAT'S OVER WITH--
--ARISE. WE HAVE MANY THINGS TO ACCOMPLISH TOGETHER, BROTHER.
AND MANY UNIVERSES AWAY, ON THE PLANET THAT WAS THE HOME BASE OF THE WARLORD PANGOLIN, THE WOMAN KNOWN AS ARCHANGEL FLIES IN HER BIRD-FORM OVER THE AFTERMATH OF A DREADFUL BATTLE.
NO MOTION! NONE OF THE ENEMY SEEMS TO BE LEFT! IT SEEMS TO BE SAFE NOW!
SO I CAN OPEN UP THE GATE TO AMNION-SPACE, AND BRING LORD REGULUS BACK TO THE LAND OF THE LIVING!
UNNH! THANK YOU, MILADY--
--MY WOUNDS HAVE HEALED, THOUGH NOT, I'M AFRAID WITHOUT SCARS.
BUT THAT SCARCELY MATTERS! SARSON WAS CARRYING THE BATTLE WHEN YOU PULLED ME FROM IT! I MUST FIND OUT--
--HOW SHE FARED-- OH NO!
3.

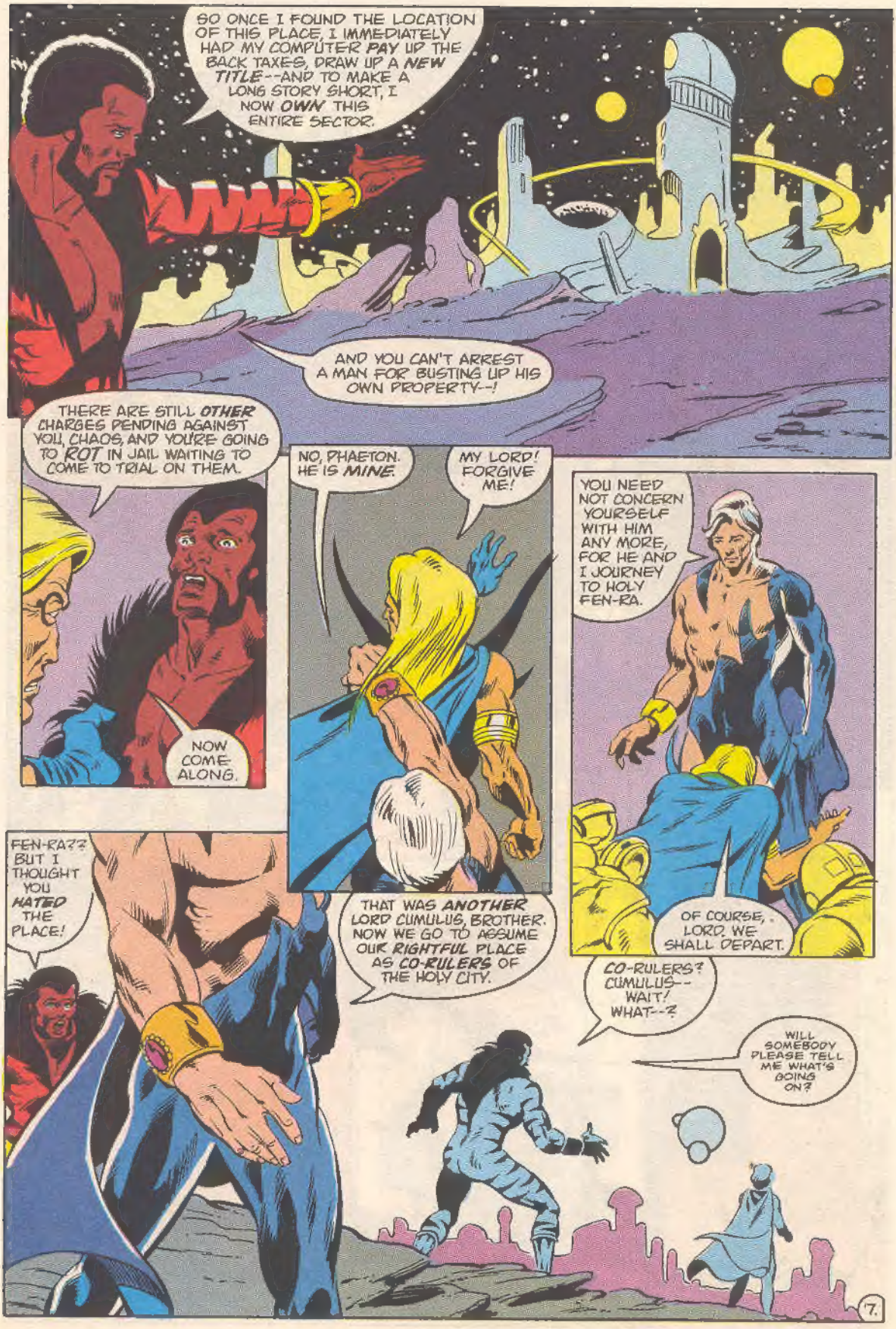

ARCHANGEL--SHE CAN'T BE DEAD! SURELY THERE'S *SOME* LIFE--?
I'M AFRAID NOT, MY LORD. SHE AND PANGOLIN KILLED EACH OTHER. HER LIFE IS GONE. THERE IS NO TRACE.
OH, SARGON--DID YOU WISH DEATH THAT MUCH? I WANTED TO--*NO!*
--AND THAT IS IN THE *EYES* OF THE ONE SHE SLEW. THE *EYES* REMEMBER.
THERE *IS* A WAY! THERE *IS* A PLACE WHERE SHE YET LIVES--
IT IS A BITTER WAY TO RETURN TO LIFE, LITTLE ONE--BUT I CANNOT LOSE YOU SO QUICKLY AFTER FINDING YOU.
HERE IS SARGON, MISTRESS OF WAR, HER LAST DESPAIR AND LAST PASSION--FOR DEATH.
4.

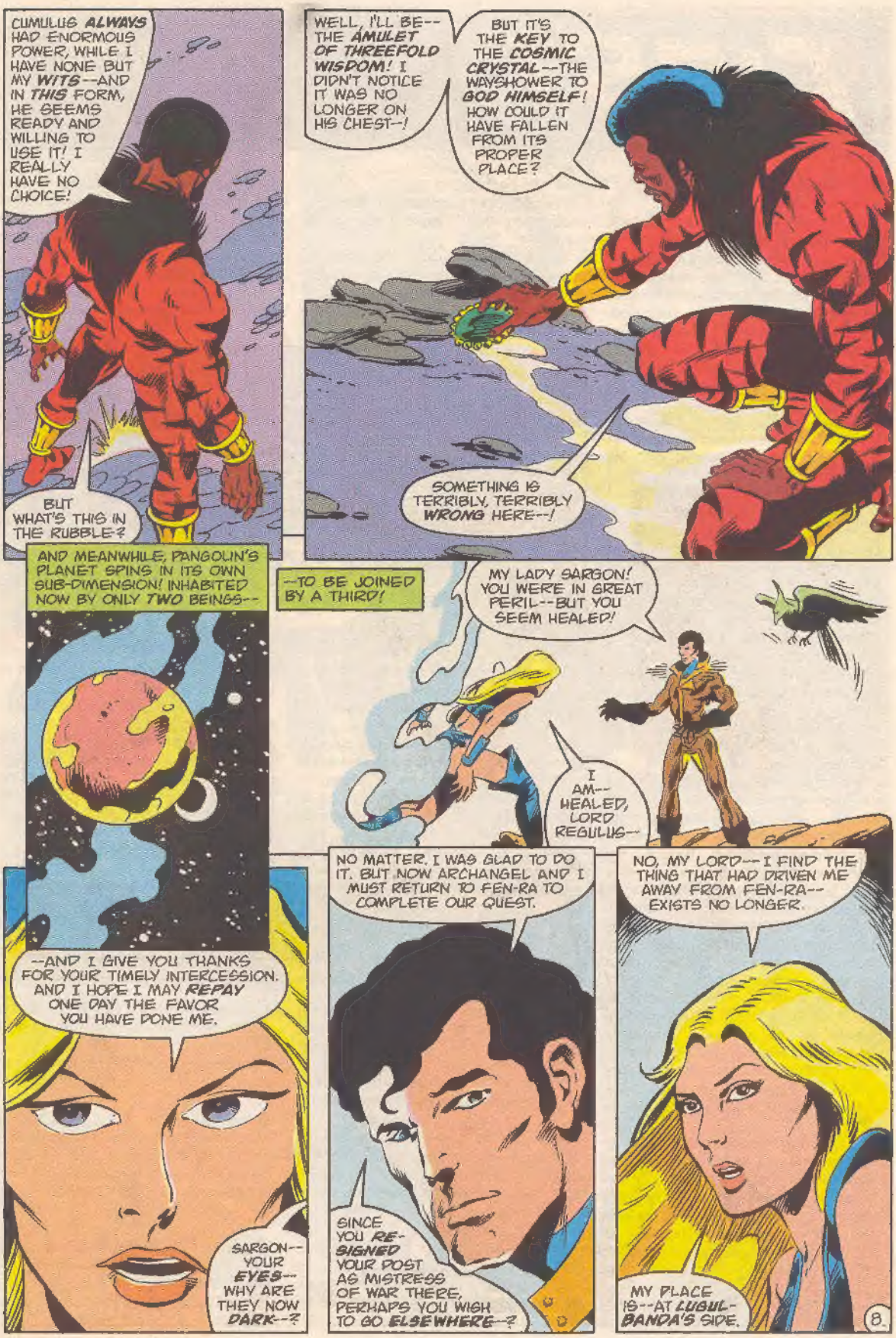

ARISE, SARGON! RETURN TO US. BREATHE THE BITTER AIR THAT IS OUR LIVES--AND *TURN* FROM THE LAST DESPAIR!

IT'S *WORKING*, MY LORD! THE LADY WILL LIVE--BUT I WONDER--WILL SHE BE *SARGON*?
WE SHALL SEE--BUT FOR NOW SHE MUST RECOVER IN AMNION-SPACE EVEN AS I DID.
AND NOW, MILADY, WE SHOULD TURN TO PANGOLIN, AND DISCOVER WHETHER WE HAVE OUR *PRIZE*--

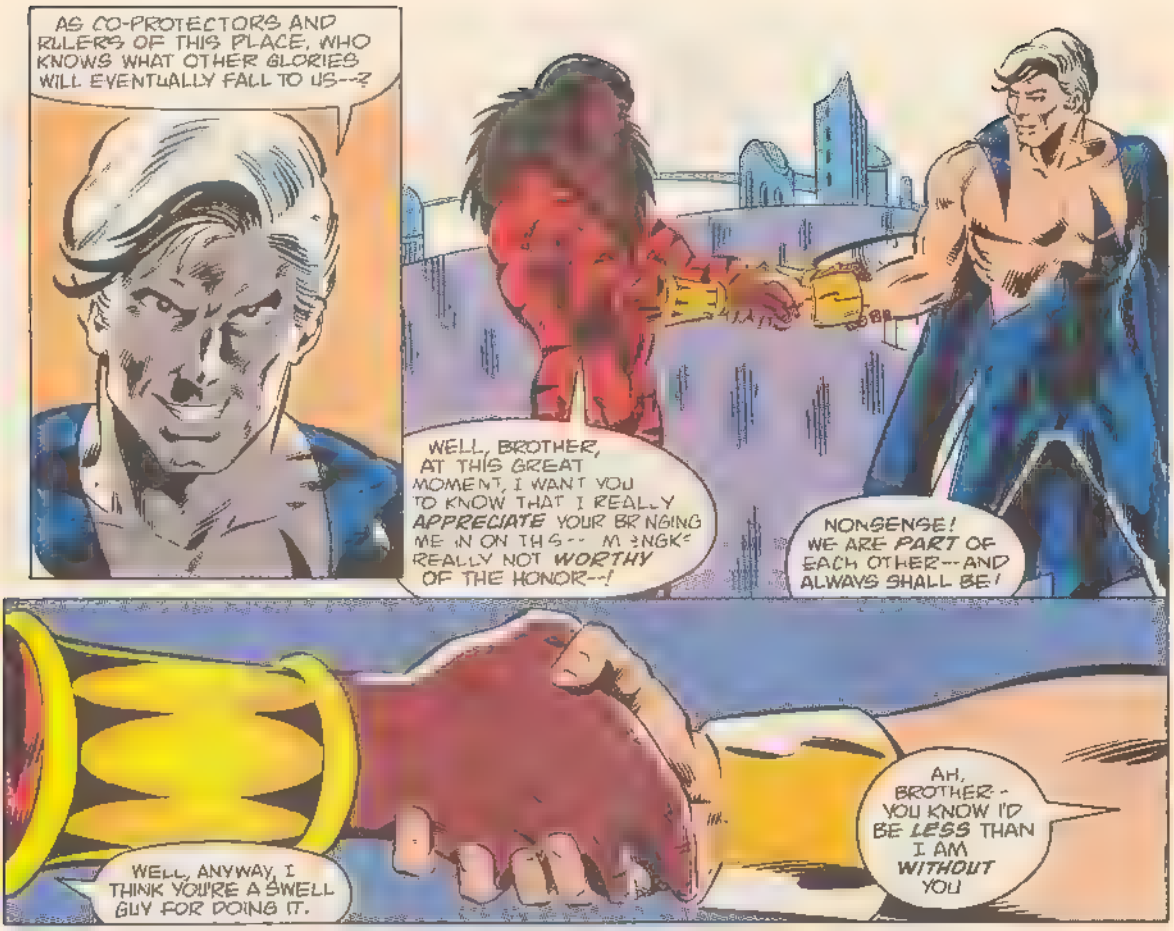

IT IS! IT IS! *THE HEART OF THE SUNRISE*!!
OUR *QUEST* OF AGES IS *OVER*! WE CAN RETURN TO THE HOLY CITY OF FEN-RA--AND I NEED BE ITS *OUT-RIDER* NO LONGER!
5.

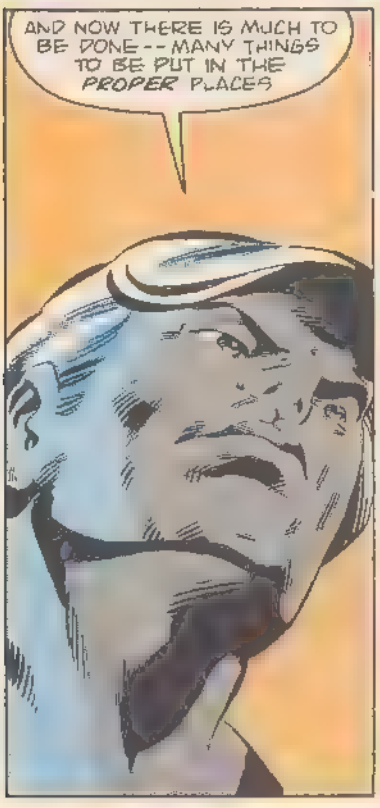
AND BACK IN CYNOSURE...
WHY SURE, CUMULUS, BROTHER--WHERE YOU GO, I GO! WE'RE A TEAM!
I'LL BE RIGHT WITH YOU--
--I JUST HAVE TO PUT MY AFFAIRS IN ORDER, PACK, YOU KNOW, CLOSE OUT MY BANK ACCOUNT, THAT SORT OF THING--
--SO IF YOU DON'T MIND, I'LL ONLY BE A FEW HOURS--
--I'LL BE RIGHT BACK, DON'T YOU WORRY, JUST AS QUICK AS CAN BE--
MY NOSE IS BLEEDING. THE LUNATIC COULD HAVE KILLED ME!
YOU WAIT RIGHT HERE--!
NOT SO FAST, CHAOS! YOU'RE NOT GOING TO GET AWAY FROM ME THIS TIME!
PHAETON--! LOOK, I HAVEN'T GOT TIME--YOU DON'T REALIZE WHAT'S GOING ON HERE--!
YOU'RE UNDER ARREST FOR MASS DESTRUCTION, TERRORISM, ENDANGERING COSMIC SAFETY, AND WHATEVER ELSE OUR PROSECUTION SOFTWARE CAN COME UP WITH! YOU'RE COMING DOWN TO THE STASIS-HOUSE WITH ME, AND THEN--
I'M AFRAID NOT, PHAETON. YOU SEE, THIS BEING A LEGENDARY LOST SECTOR OF CYNOSURE, NATURALLY THE TITLE HAD LAPSED AND HAD BEEN OFFICIALLY IMPOUNDED FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS OF BACK TAXES.
SO WHAT?
6


SO ONCE I FOUND THE LOCATION OF THIS PLACE, I IMMEDIATELY HAD MY COMPUTER PAY UP THE BACK TAXES, DRAW UP A NEW TITLE--AND TO MAKE A LONG STORY SHORT, I NOW OWN THIS ENTIRE SECTOR.
AND YOU CAN'T ARREST A MAN FOR BUSTING UP HIS OWN PROPERTY--!
THERE ARE STILL OTHER CHARGES PENDING AGAINST YOU, CHAOS, AND YOU'RE GOING TO ROT IN JAIL WAITING TO COME TO TRIAL ON THEM.
NOW COME ALONG.
NO, PHAETON. HE IS MINE.
MY LORD! FORGIVE ME!
YOU NEED NOT CONCERN YOURSELF WITH HIM ANY MORE, FOR HE AND I JOURNEY TO HOLY FEN-RA.
OF COURSE, LORD. WE SHALL DEPART.
FEN-RA?? BUT I THOUGHT YOU HATED THE PLACE!
THAT WAS ANOTHER LORD CUMULUS, BROTHER. NOW WE GO TO ASSUME OUR RIGHTFUL PLACE AS CO-RULERS OF THE HOLY CITY.
CO-RULERS? CUMULUS-- WAIT! WHAT--?
WILL SOMEBODY PLEASE TELL ME WHAT'S GOING ON?
7.

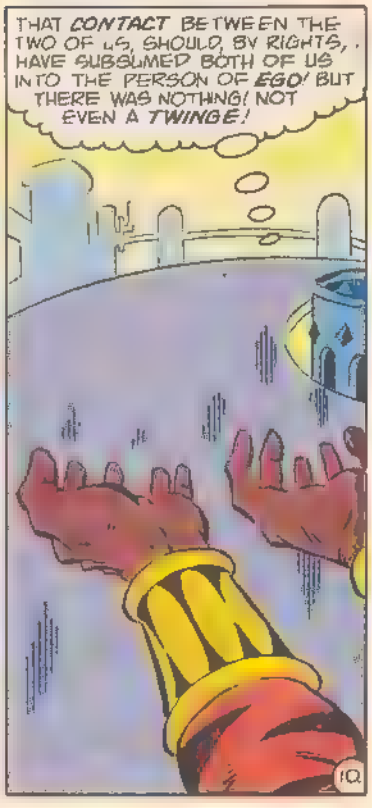

CUMULUS ALWAYS HAD ENORMOUS POWER, WHILE I HAVE NONE BUT MY WITS--AND IN THIS FORM, HE SEEMS READY AND WILLING TO USE IT! I REALLY HAVE NO CHOICE!
BUT WHAT'S THIS IN THE RUBBLE?
WELL, I'LL BE--THE AMULET OF THREEFOLD WISDOM! I DIDN'T NOTICE IT WAS NO LONGER ON HIS CHEST--!
BUT IT'S THE KEY TO THE COSMIC CRYSTAL--THE WAYSHOWER TO GOD HIMSELF! HOW COULD IT HAVE FALLEN FROM ITS PROPER PLACE?
SOMETHING IS TERRIBLY, TERRIBLY WRONG HERE--!
AND MEANWHILE, PANGOLIN'S PLANET SPINS IN ITS OWN SUB-DIMENSION! INHABITED NOW BY ONLY TWO BEINGS--
--TO BE JOINED BY A THIRD!
MY LADY SARGON! YOU WERE IN GREAT PERIL--BUT YOU SEEM HEALED!
I AM--HEALED, LORD REGULUS--
--AND I GIVE YOU THANKS FOR YOUR TIMELY INTERCESSION. AND I HOPE I MAY REPAY ONE DAY THE FAVOR YOU HAVE DONE ME.
SARGON--YOUR EYES--WHY ARE THEY NOW DARK--?
NO MATTER. I WAS GLAD TO DO IT. BUT NOW ARCHANGEL AND I MUST RETURN TO FEN-RA TO COMPLETE OUR QUEST.
SINCE YOU RE-SIGNED YOUR POST AS MISTRESS OF WAR THERE, PERHAPS YOU WISH TO GO ELSEWHERE--?
NO, MY LORD--I FIND THE THING THAT HAD DRIVEN ME AWAY FROM FEN-RA--EXISTS NO LONGER.
MY PLACE IS--AT LUBUL-BANDA'S SIDE.
8.

THEN, MY LADY, WILL YOU BEAR THE BOTH OF US BACK TO FEN-RA?
YOU ARE A BURDEN I AM USED TO, MY LORD, AND SARGON WILL BE A JOY TO BEAR--
AND THOUGH THIS WERE THE MOST DISTANT CORNER OF COSMIC INFINITY, AND I WERE BLIND AND MY WINGS CLIPPED, STILL WOULD I FIND MY WAY BACK
THEN, MY LADY, TAKE US HOME!
FEN-RA! THE CITY OF THE COSMIC CRYSTAL-- THE VERY HEART OF THE POWER AND GLORY OF HE WHO DREAMS! THIS IS OUR CITY, BROTHER--AND TODAY WE COME INTO OUR INHERITANCE!
RIGHT SURE ANYTHING YOU SAY, L C --!
9


AS CO-PROTECTORS AND RULERS OF THIS PLACE, WHO KNOWS WHAT OTHER GLORIES WILL EVENTUALLY FALL TO US--?
WELL, BROTHER, AT THIS GREAT MOMENT, I WANT YOU TO KNOW THAT I REALLY *APPRECIATE* YOUR BRINGING ME IN ON THIS-- MAKES REALLY NOT *WORTHY* OF THE HONOR--!
NONSENSE! WE ARE *PART* OF EACH OTHER--AND ALWAYS SHALL BE!
WELL, ANYWAY, I THINK YOU'RE A SWELL GUY FOR DOING IT.
AH, BROTHER - YOU KNOW I'D BE *LESS* THAN I AM *WITHOUT* YOU


AND NOW THERE IS MUCH TO BE DONE--MANY THINGS TO BE PUT IN THE *PROPER* PLACES

COME CHAOS.
RIGHT WITH YOU.
THIS IS *WORSE* THAN I COULD BELIEVE!

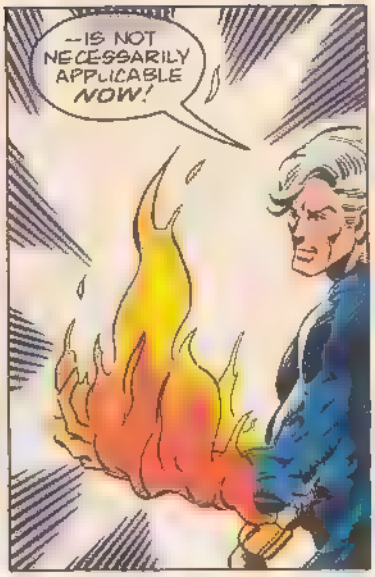

THAT *CONTACT* BETWEEN THE TWO OF US, SHOULD, BY RIGHTS, HAVE SUBSUMED BOTH OF US INTO THE PERSON OF *EGO*! BUT THERE WAS NOTHING! NOT EVEN A *TWINGE*!

--BUT NOT ONLY DID THE EXPLOSION CHANGE HIM--BUT IT MIGHT HAVE KILLED HER!
BUT- BEFORE THE EXPLOSION AT THE GATES WE WERE STARTING TO FUSE INTO EGO-- AND THEN CUMULUS PULLED AWAY! I DON'T REMEMBER ANYTHING AFTER THAT--
AND IF THAT'S TRUE, HE WHO DREAMS, WHO IS THE FATHER OF ALL THREE OF US, MIGHT NOT BE PLEASED AT ALL- AND WE'RE WALKING RIGHT INTO HIS HOLY CITY!
WELL, BROTHER, ARE YOU COMING OR NOT? I HOPE YOU ARE--!
OF COURSE! I'M RIGHT BEHIND YOU! YOU HAVE THOUGHT THIS ALL OUT, HAVEN'T YOU, CUMULUS?
FEAR NOT, DEAR BROTHER, FOR I KNOW EXACTLY WHAT I DO! NOW-- LET THE GATES OF FEN-RA OPEN! LORD CUMULUS COMMANDS IT!
SHHH! THEY MIGHT HEAR YOU!

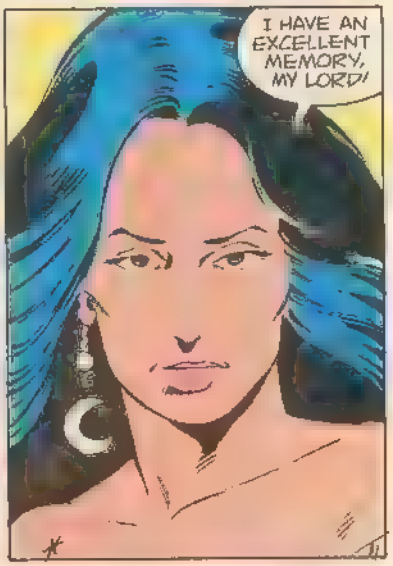
I WAS RATHER COUNTING ON IT, BROTHER--!
SORRY--GUESS I'M A BIT EDGY--THEY DIDN'T TREAT ME WELL HERE LAST TIME, YOU KNOW--!
CHAOS AND CUMULUS! WHAT A PLEASANT SURPRISE!
EXCUSE THE MESS--I'VE BEEN SUPERVISING FEN-RA'S REBUILDING--!
YOU'RE LOOKING WELL, MY LORD! HAVEN'T CHANGED A BIT!
EXCEPT FOR LEARNING A FEW LESSONS, I AM THE SAME, WISE ONE
WELL, WE'VE MISSED YOUR PRESENCE.
IT NEED NEVER ENDURE THAT LACK AGAIN I'VE RETURNED TO STAY
WONDERFUL NEWS, MY BOY-- AND NOW, IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME, I HAVE MUCH TO DO--!
IF MY COLLEAGE IS BLIND, I AM NOT. THE COSTUME SUITS YOU--AND THE HAIR.
THANK YOU, MY LADY URNANSHE
I TRUST THINGS ARE WORKING OUT--
THAT IS NOT MY NAME, WOMAN
--AREN'T THEY, DAVID?
NOW, NOW, MY LORD--
12

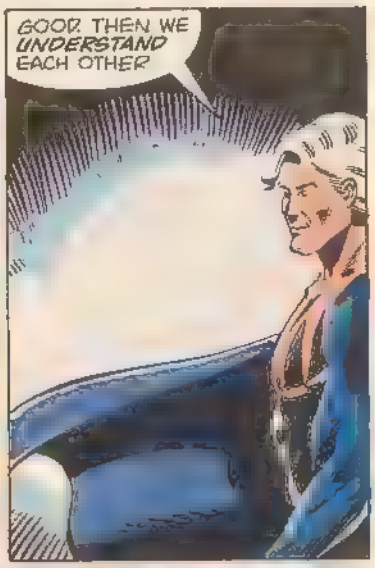
YOU WERE TOLD ONCE BEFORE NEVER TO DO THAT TO A WIZARD!
MY ARM--!

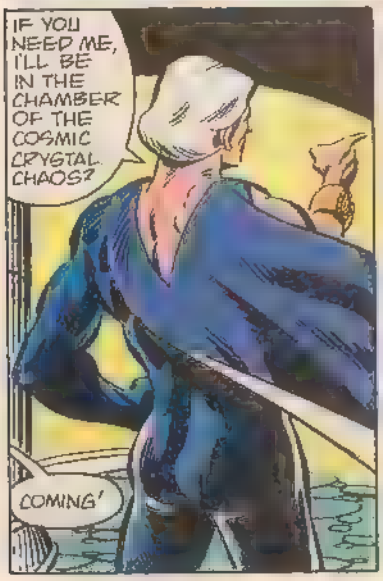
WHAT WAS TOLD TO ME BEFORE, URNANSHE--


--IS NOT NECESSARILY APPLICABLE NOW!

AND YOU SHOULD NEVER FORGET WHO WEILDS POWER IN FEN-RA

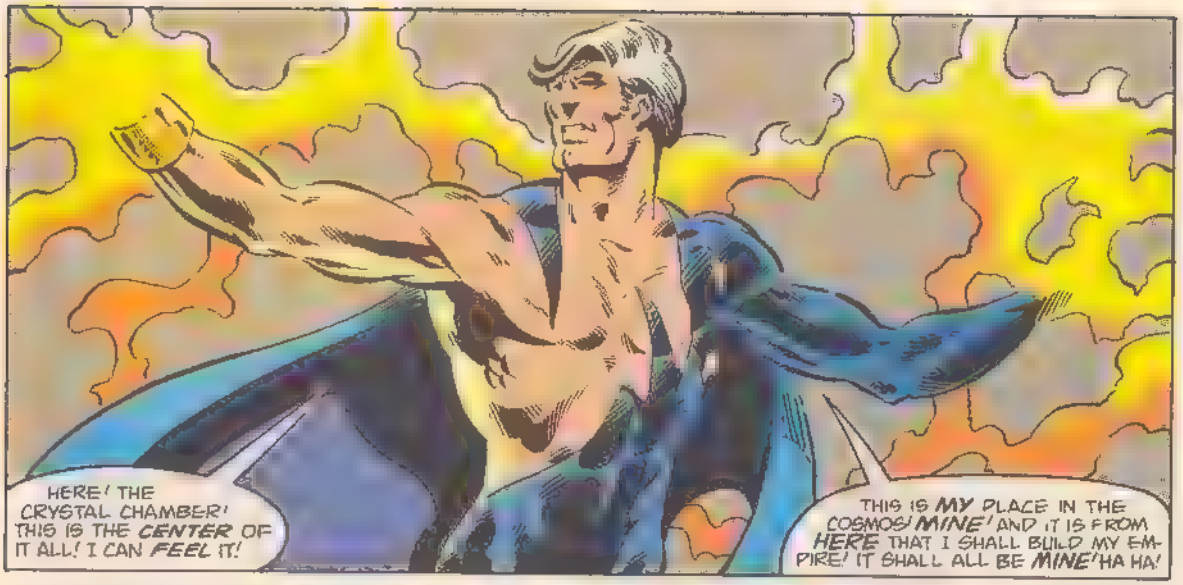

I HAVE AN EXCELLENT MEMORY, MY LORD!


GOOD. THEN WE UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER

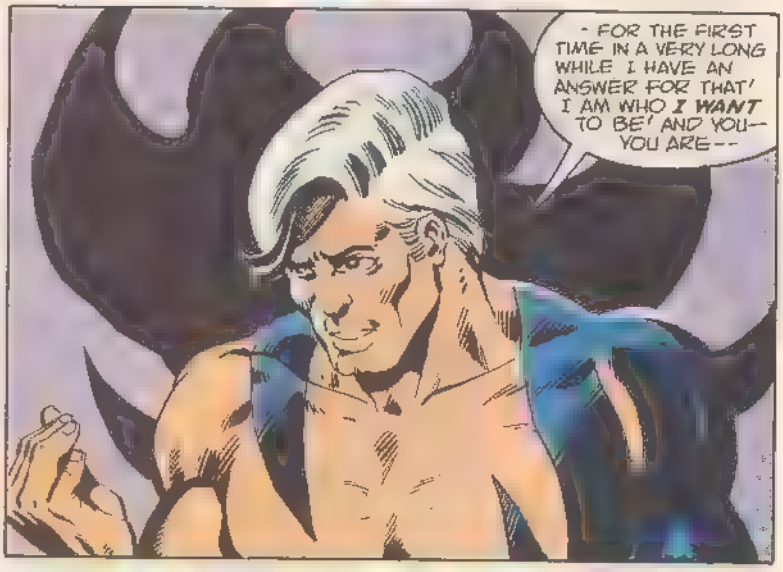

IF YOU NEED ME, I'LL BE IN THE CHAMBER OF THE COSMIC CRYSTAL CHAOS?
COMING!

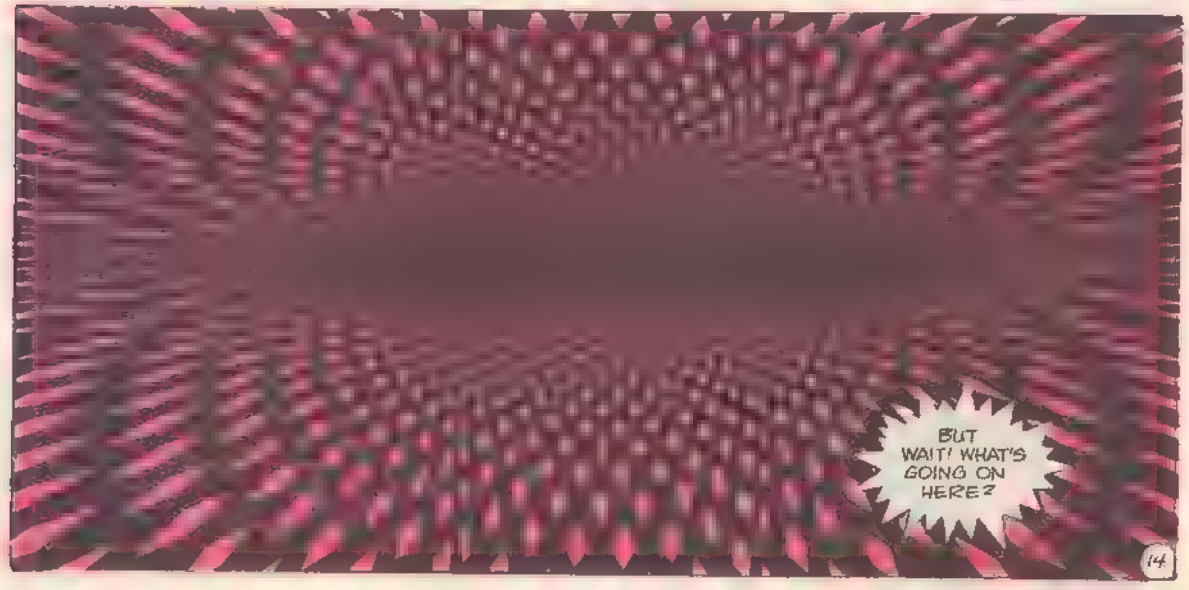
UH, URNANSHE--I'M MORE THAN A LITTLE SCARED DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHAT'S HAPPENED TO OUR OLD MR WIMP-WITH-A-CODPIECE?

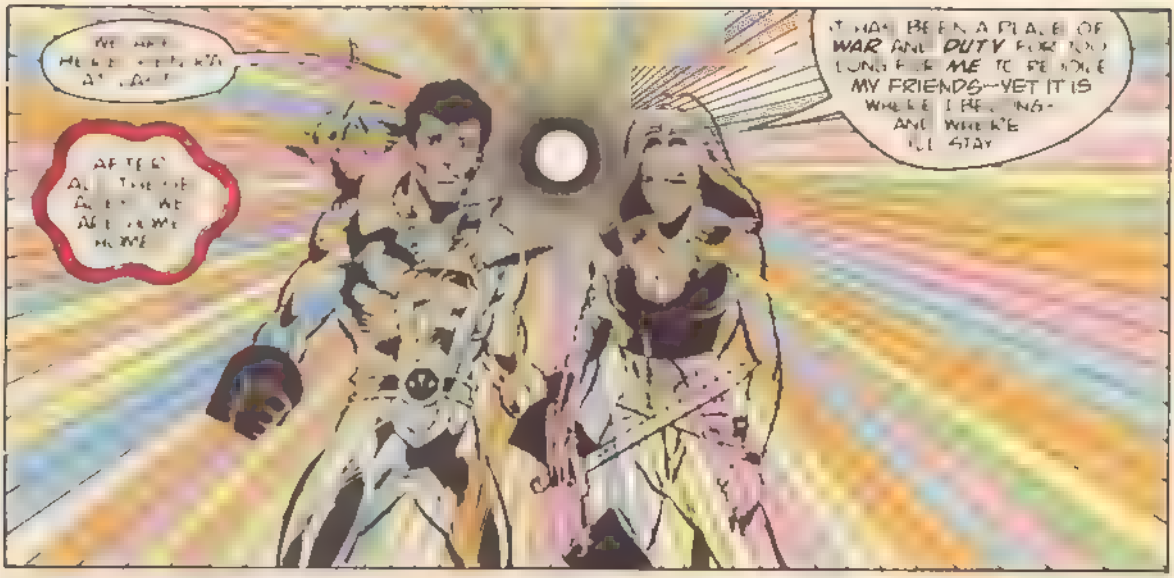
SOMETHING IMPORTANT, I'D SAY
NOW IF YOU'D EXCUSE ME, I HAVE SOMETHING TO DO.

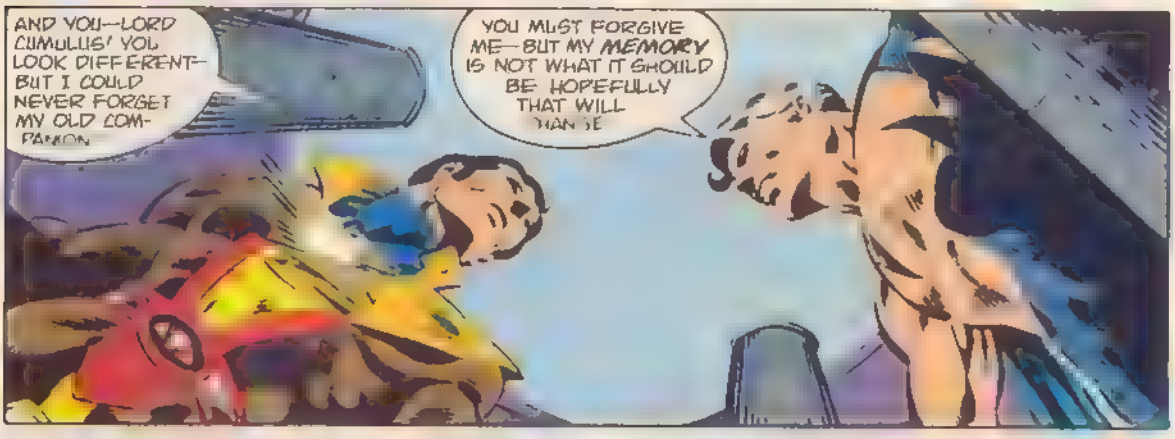

HERE! THE CRYSTAL CHAMBER! THIS IS THE CENTER OF IT ALL! I CAN FEEL IT!
THIS IS MY PLACE IN THE COSMOS! MINE! AND IT IS FROM HERE THAT I SHALL BUILD MY EMPIRE! IT SHALL ALL BE MINE! HA HA!

YOU--WHO ARE YOU? THAT WAS MY LAUGH YOU JUST LAUGHED! AND COME TO THINK OF IT, YOU'VE BEEN ACTING AN AWFUL LOT - A LOT LIKE ME! WHO ARE YOU?
BROTHER DEAR- -


- FOR THE FIRST TIME IN A VERY LONG WHILE I HAVE AN ANSWER FOR THAT! I AM WHO I WANT TO BE! AND YOU-- YOU ARE--

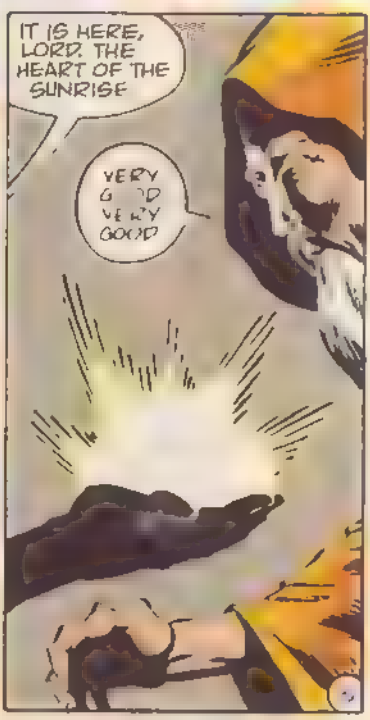

BUT WAIT! WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?


IT HAS BEEN A PLACE OF WAR AND DUTY FOR YOU LONG FOR ME TO BE WITH MY FRIENDS--YET IT IS WHERE I BELONG-- AND WHERE'LL STAY


AND YOU--LORD CUMULUS! YOU LOOK DIFFERENT-- BUT I COULD NEVER FORGET MY OLD COMPANION
YOU MUST FORGIVE ME--BUT MY MEMORY IS NOT WHAT IT SHOULD BE HOPEFULLY THAT WILL CHANGE

I'LL BE GLAD TO REFRESH YOUR RECALL--TELL THE OLD TALES-- LUGULBANDA! IS IT TRUE?

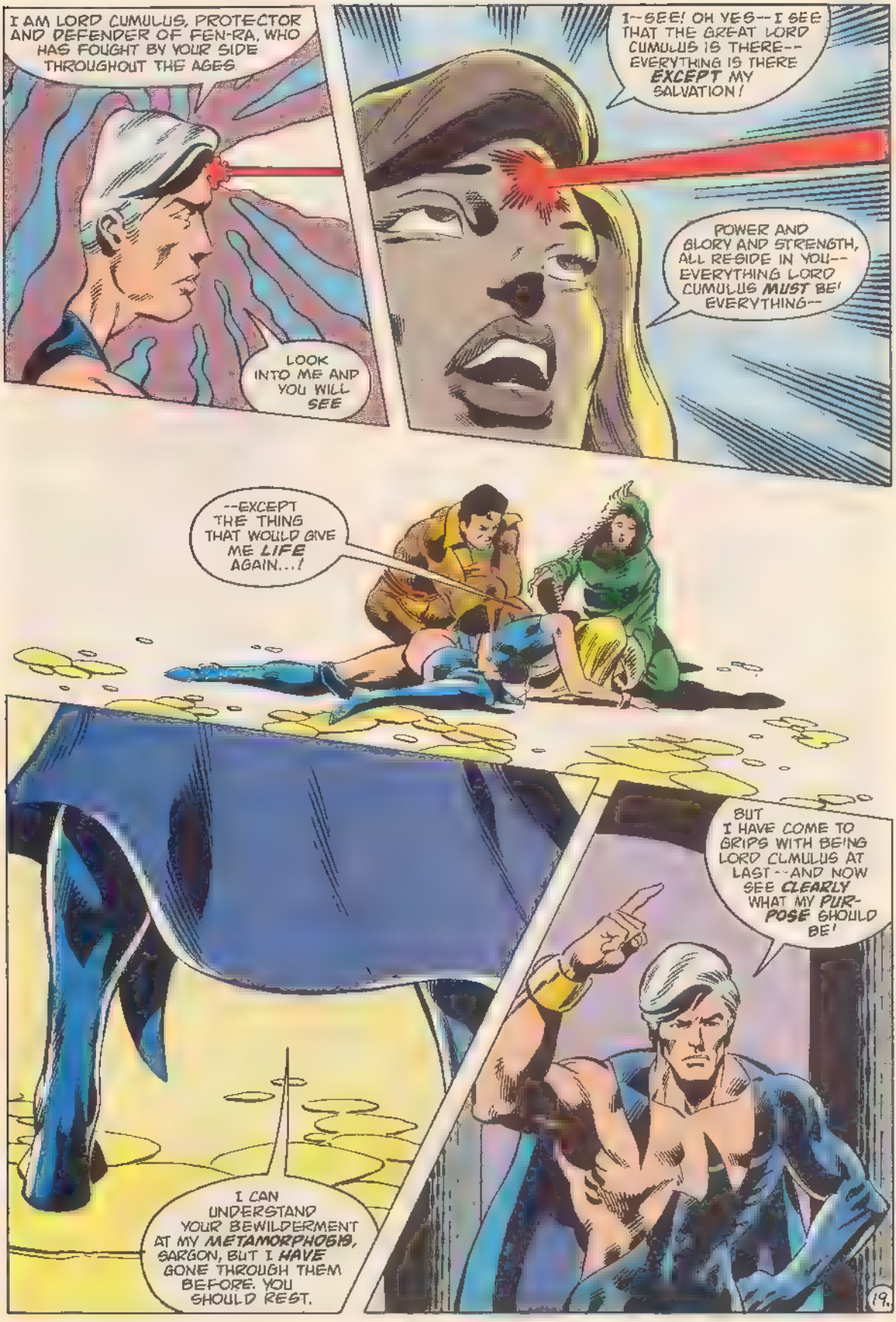
O KNOWLEDGE INCARNATE, WE PENANCE MISDEED AND FULFILLED INTO YOUR GRACES.


IT IS HERE, LORD. THE HEART OF THE SUNRISE
VERY GOOD VERY GOOD

THE PRICE IS PAID SO LET THE BURDEN BE LIFTED!
REGULUS-- I FEEL-- AM I HUMAN AGAIN?
YOU WERE ALWAYS MORE THAN THAT, MY LADY AND THE BOND OF SERVITUDE IS BROKEN BETWEEN US!
FREE-- MYSELF-- AND HOME--!
REGULUS--MY LORD--I WANTED NOTHING MORE THAN TO BE SEPARATED FROM YOU, ALL THESE AGES--AND IT IS STILL SWEET, THIS FREEDOM
BUT I ALSO KNOW THAT, ALL THESE AGES, NOTHING SPOKE BETWEEN US BUT THE BOND THAT MADE SLAVES OF US BOTH YOU ARE A GOOD MAN, OUTRIDER
I SHALL NOT MISS YOU, NOT FOR A LONG WHILE BUT I SHALL NOT CURSE THE HOUR WE MET, OR THE LOVE WE SHARED ANY MORE
16

I CAN THINK OF NO BETTER GIFT TO GIVE YOU THAN THAT PRECIOUS THING YOU SEARCHED SO HARD FOR--
--MOREOVER, RIGHT NOW I CAN'T SEEM TO REMEMBER JUST WHAT I WANTED IT FOR BUT ITS POWER IS MATCHED ONLY BY THE COSMIC CRYSTAL!
LUGULBANDA, IF THIS IS A JOKE -
NOTHING LUGULBANDA CAN SAY OR DO COULD EVER INSULT ME, MY LORD - BUT YOUR OFFER DOES ME GREAT HONOR INDEED.
--IT'S A PRETTY POOR ONE TO TELL HIM NOW THAT HE'S FOUND THIS FOR YOU, HE MIGHT AS WELL KEEP IT BECAUSE YOU CAN'T REMEMBER WHY YOU WANTED IT!
MY FRIEND, MY WAR-BROTHER, MY LORD-- THE HEART IS YOURS TO TAKE
GIVE THE HEART TO ME, LORD REGULUS, AND I IN TURN WILL REWARD YOU WITH WHATEVER THE PROTECTOR AND RULER OF FEN-RA CAN BESTOW!
BEHOLD HOW IT SHINES BRIGHTER TO GREET YOUR TOUCH--!

BUT WHAT IS THIS? WHY DO YOU LOOK SO STRANGE IN THE LIGHT, CUMULUS?
IT DOESN'T MATTER! GIVE IT TO ME!
MY LORD--FORGIVE ME, BUT IN YOUR PLACE, I SEE ONLY-- CHURNING CHAOS -!
I AM CUMULUS! GIVE ME THE HEART--!
YOU MONSTER!
YOU'VE DESTROYED CUMULUS AND HE WAS MY ONLY HOPE. MY ONLY HOPE!
NEVER RAISE YOUR SWORD AGAINST ME, SARGON- NEVER!
8

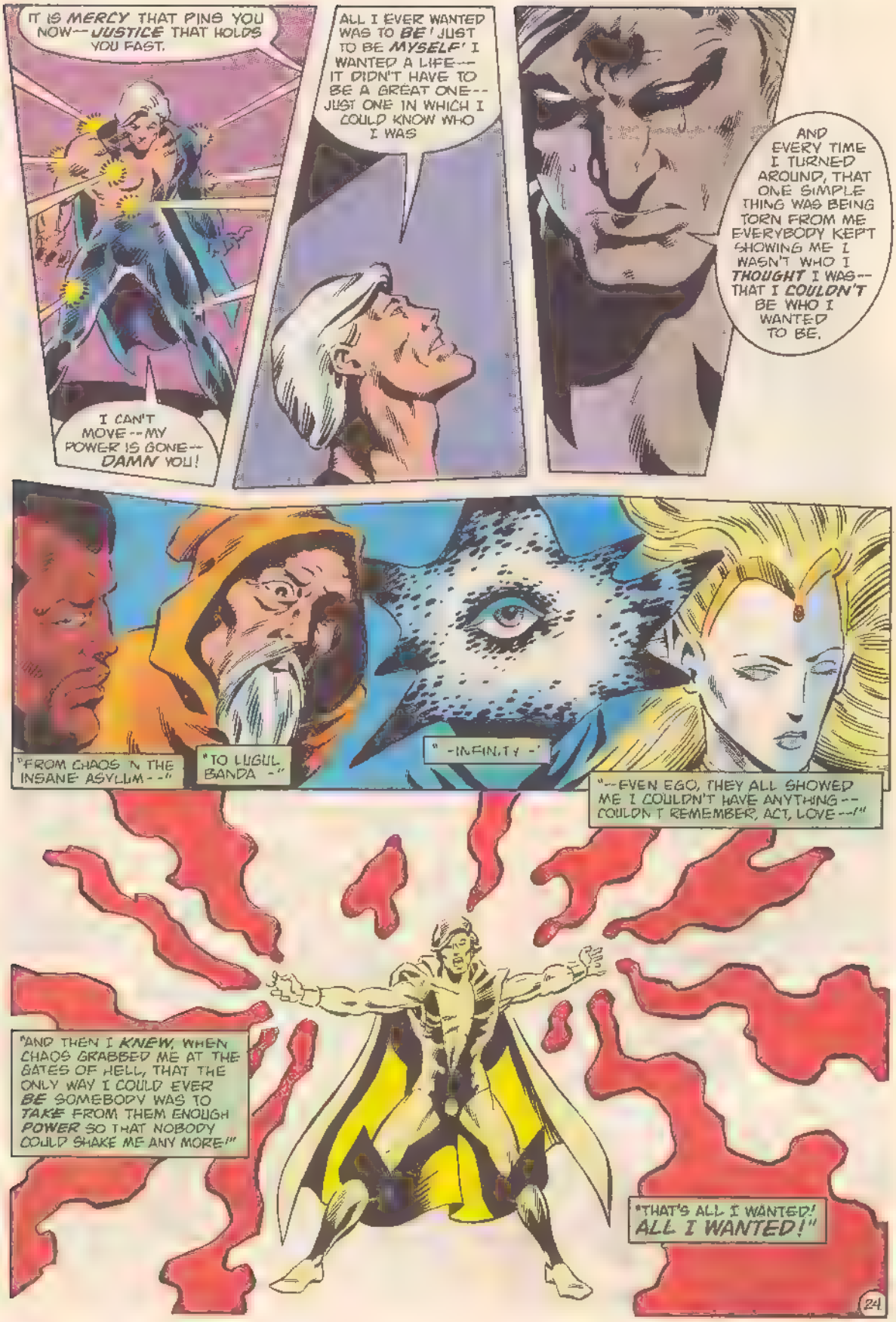

I AM LORD CUMULUS, PROTECTOR AND DEFENDER OF FEN-RA, WHO HAS FOUGHT BY YOUR SIDE THROUGHOUT THE AGES.
LOOK INTO ME AND YOU WILL SEE
I--SEE! OH YES--I SEE THAT THE GREAT LORD CUMULUS IS THERE--EVERYTHING IS THERE EXCEPT MY SALVATION!
POWER AND GLORY AND STRENGTH, ALL RESIDE IN YOU--EVERYTHING LORD CUMULUS MUST BE! EVERYTHING--
--EXCEPT THE THING THAT WOULD GIVE ME LIFE AGAIN...!
BUT I HAVE COME TO GRIPS WITH BEING LORD CUMULUS AT LAST--AND NOW SEE CLEARLY WHAT MY PURPOSE SHOULD BE!
I CAN UNDERSTAND YOUR BEWILDERMENT AT MY METAMORPHOSIS, SARGON, BUT I HAVE GONE THROUGH THEM BEFORE. YOU SHOULD REST.
19.

FOR FEN-RA THROUGH THE AGES HAS BECOME A CITY RAVAGED, DENUDED OF ITS TRUE POWER AND NOBILITY! THAT IS WHY SUCH FOLK AS XANDER, AND EVEN MY BROTHER CHAOS IN HIS FOOLISHNESS COULD DO IT HARM!
WELL, NO LONGER! NOW AND FOREVER, I AM ITS PROTECTOR— AND FEN-RA SHALL DRAW UNTO IT THE GREATEST WARRIORS AND MOST CUNNING WEAPONERS AND WIZARDS FROM THE REACHES OF THE COSMIC ALL!
FEN-RA SHALL STAND SUPREME IN THE COSMOS— AND THE RULERS OF FEN-RA SHALL BE LORD CUMULUS AND PRINCE CHAOS— THE RIGHTFUL HEIRS OF HE-WHO-DREAMS!

SKRAK!
WHAT IN THE NAME OF--
I KNEW THIS WAS A BAD IDEA!
SORRY ABOUT THE DRAMATICS, BUT YOU SAID THE SECRET WORD! DUCK COMES DOWN AND GIVES YOU +100.
AH! SARGON, LUGULBANDA, REGULUS AND CHRISEYDE-- AND PRINCE CHAOS HIDING BACK THERE! HELLO!
CAPRICE! IT IS ALWAYS AN UNEXPECTED PLEASURE-- AND THIS MUST BE THE YOUNG MAN WHO FOLLOWS YOU ABOUT!
I AM TANZ, WIZARD!
CAPRICE --WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THIS?
YOU SAID YOU'D GET BACK TO ME AND YOU DIDN'T
CUMULUS, CUMULUS-- WHEN I TOLD YOU YOU SHOULD BE WHAT YOU WANT TO BE I'M AFRAID YOU MISUNDERSTOOD--AND NOW MEASURES HAVE TO BE TAKEN
MEASURES? I AM RULER OF FEN-RA! YOU CAN'T TAKE MEASURES AGAINST ME!
HAS IT NEVER OCCURED TO YOU TO ASK WHY LORD CUMULUS IN HIS PREVIOUS INCARNATIONS WAS NEVER MADE KING OF FEN-RA-- INDEED WHY FEN RA HAS NEVER HAD A RULER?
HAS IT NOT STRUCK YOU AS ODD THAT HOLY FEN-RA IS IN THE CUSTODIANSHIP OF A BUNCH OF WIZARDS WHO DON'T SEEM TO BE ABLE TO RUN AN ANT-FARM? HMM?
THAT IS BECAUSE YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT FEN-RA IS!
I WIELD THE GREATEST POWER HERE-- AND I DETERMINE WHAT FEN-RA IS AND WHAT IT SHALL BE! OPPOSE ME AND YOU SHALL BE DESTROYED!
OH, I'D ADVISE YOU NOT TO TRY THAT
OR ELSE I MIGHT BECOME--
--DISPLEASED WITH YOU!
IT--IT'S HE WHO DREAMS!

THIS IS NUTS! IS SHE REALLY HE WHO DREAMS?
WHEN SHE WANTS TO BE QUIET
WHY DID YOU DO THIS, MY SON? WHY DID YOU SEEK TO DESTROY EGO, YOUR SISTER, MY DAUGHTER, YOUR SELF?
WHAT IS IT TO YOU? MY LIFE-- MY IDENTITY-- IS MY OWN!
I DON'T TAKE ORDERS FROM YOU, EVEN IF YOU ARE GOD! NOT FROM ANYBODY!
EVEN YOU MAY BE SUBJECT TO MY WRATH, MY SON! BEWARE--!
I MADE YOU WHAT YOU ARE TODAY, YOU POMPOUS ABSTRACTION! I DON'T HAVE TO BEWARE ANYTHING!
YOU ARE IN DEEP PERIL, MY SON! FOR THE LAST TIME, FOREBEAR!
I WILL NOT! YOU SCREWED UP MY LIFE AND I HATE YOU!
22

I WAS TORN FROM A STABLE, MORTAL LIFE--UPROOTED AND THROWN INTO INSANITY FOR THE SAKE OF YOU!
I LOST MY HAPPINESS--MY WORLD--I REGENERATED YOU WHEN YOU WERE DYING! AND YOU GAVE ME NOTHING IN RETURN! NOTHING! NOT EVEN IDENTITY!
WELL, YOU UNGRATEFUL SON-OF-A-BITCH, MAYBE IT'S TIME THERE WAS A NEW GOD IN CHARGE HERE--YOUR SON!
I WILL LAY YOU LOW AND BRING SOME MERCY TO THE UNIVERSE!
MERCY--AND ALL OTHER THINGS--ARE MINE TO BESTOW, MY SON.


IT IS MERCY THAT PINS YOU NOW--JUSTICE THAT HOLDS YOU FAST.
I CAN'T MOVE--MY POWER IS GONE--DAMN YOU!
ALL I EVER WANTED WAS TO BE! JUST TO BE MYSELF! I WANTED A LIFE--IT DIDN'T HAVE TO BE A GREAT ONE--JUST ONE IN WHICH I COULD KNOW WHO I WAS
AND EVERY TIME I TURNED AROUND, THAT ONE SIMPLE THING WAS BEING TORN FROM ME EVERYBODY KEPT SHOWING ME I WASN'T WHO I THOUGHT I WAS--THAT I COULDN'T BE WHO I WANTED TO BE.
"FROM CHAOS 'N THE INSANE ASYLUM--"
"TO LUGUL BANDA -"
" -INFINITY -"
"--EVEN EGO, THEY ALL SHOWED ME I COULDN'T HAVE ANYTHING--COULDN'T REMEMBER, ACT, LOVE--!"
"AND THEN I KNEW, WHEN CHAOS GRABBED ME AT THE GATES OF HELL, THAT THE ONLY WAY I COULD EVER BE SOMEBODY WAS TO TAKE FROM THEM ENOUGH POWER SO THAT NOBODY COULD SHAKE ME ANY MORE!"
"THAT'S ALL I WANTED! ALL I WANTED!"

AND ALL YOU HAD TO GIVE UP WAS LOVE! LOOK AT ME, CUMULUS! I AM NOT ALIVE -- OUTRIDER REVIVED ME FROM MY MURDERER'S EYES! HE GAVE ME BACK MY DUTY, MY COURAGE -- MY HATE!
BUT THIS-- THIS IS NOT ALIVE! THERE IS NO LOVE HERE--AND WITHOUT IT I CAN'T BE!
SO I RETURNED HERE, IN HOPE OF FINDING YOU AND THE LOVE I KNEW WAS IN YOU--AND I FIND HERE THAT YOU'VE THROWN IT AWAY!
YOU BASTARD, YOU THREW IT AWAY!
YOU'RE NOT SOMEBODY NOW, CUMULUS-- YOU'RE WORSE THAN NOBODY-- YOU ARE A MONSTER!
NO!!
YOU'RE A LIAR! A DAMNED LIAR!
25

THERE IS A HISSING SOUND AS THE DUST THAT WAS ONCE SARGON FALLS.
FATHER--WHY? WHY'D YOU LET HIM DO THAT?
HOW COULD YOU JUST STAND BY AND LET AN EVIL DEED GO UNPUN-- AND WHY THE HELL AM I TALKING LIKE THIS?
AN ODD SPEECH, YOU'RE THINKING, FROM CHAOS THE ROGUE, THE VILLAIN, THE PRINCE OF MADNESS? BUT, MY SON, YOU ARE THAT NO LONGER.
WHEN CUMULUS PICKED THE THINGS HE WANTED FROM YOUR PARTIAL FUSION, HE LEFT THE REST OF THEM TO YOU--THE COWARDICE, THE DOUBT--BUT ALSO THE COMPASSION AND THE SENSE OF HUMOR.
A PITY--HAD HE TAKEN THE LATTER, ALL THIS MIGHT NOT HAVE BEEN NECESSARY. BUT IT IS.
CUMULUS. YOU HAVE KILLED MY DAUGHTER EGO. YOU HAVE MUTILATED YOURSELF.
YOU MUST BE PUNISHED.

ALL I EVER WANTED WAS TO BE--AND TO BE LOVED FOR WHAT I WAS--
THE SAME THINGS YOU JUST DENIED SARGON.
BUT I WILL LOVE YOU--I ALWAYS HAVE. YOU MUST COME INTO ME--IT IS BOTH YOUR PUNISHMENT AND YOUR REWARD.
NO, PLEASE-- IF I GO INTO THE GODHEAD, I'LL BE LOST-- THE ONE THING I WANTED WILL BE TAKEN FROM ME-- TO BE SOMEONE--!
YOU HAVE NO CHOICE. PREPARE YOURSELF.
FATHER!
FATHER, IF I--IF I AGREE TO COME TOO, TO GIVE YOU ALL OF US, NOT JUST FRAGMENTS-- COULDN'T YOU GIVE HIM WHAT HE WANTS? HE SERVED YOU MORE WILLINGLY THAN I DID--AND SARGON SERVED YOU MOST WILLINGLY OF ALL. CAN-- CAN I OFFER MYSELF IN THE BALANCE FOR THEM?
AFTER ALL, WITH BOTH OF US, EGO WILL BE WITH YOU, TOO--!
IT IS A WORTHY BARGAIN. DONE.

THEY'RE GONE! CHAOS--CUMULUS--HE WHO DREAMS--EVEN THE ASHES OF SARGON!
AND NOT JUST HE WHO DREAMS--BUT YOUR CAPRICE AS WELL! POOR TANZ--!
SHE'LL BE BACK! SHE ALWAYS IS!
WHAT'S GOING ON IN HERE--? WELL, IT SEEMS I MUST HAVE MISSED IT.
YOU MOST CERTAINLY DID, YOU OLD GOAT.
TANZ--!
BUT IF CUMULUS, CHAOS AND SARGON ARE GONE--AS THEY SEEM TO BE--WILL YOU NOT STAY, REGULUS? CHRISEYDE?
NO--WE HAVE PAID OUR PRICE TO FEN-RA--AND IT WAS TOO HIGH. IT SEEMS THAT FEN-RA EXTRACTS TOO HIGH A PRICE FROM ALMOST EVERYBODY. SO I'M OFF--PERHAPS BACK TO CYNOSURE. I CAN'T SPEAK FOR CHRISEYDE.
I MAY DO THAT AS WELL. GOODBYE--YOU CAN STILL CALL US IF YOU REALLY NEED US--!
HEY, LET ME TAG ALONG, WILL YOU? IT DRIVES ME CRAZY WAITING FOR HER TO GET TIRED OF BEING GOD.
I WONDER IF I SHOULD TAKE UP SOLITAIRE AGAIN--?
AND, IN THE PLACE WHERE IT ALL STARTED--IN AN OBSCURE UNIVERSE ON A LITTLE PLANET CALLED EARTH:
NOW, THIS JOB IS NOT THE EASIEST, NURSE--YOU'LL BE DEALING WITH SOME PRETTY DISTURBING CASES HERE IN THE ASYLUM--
LET'S TAKE THE PATIENTS ONE BY ONE, SHALL WE?
THIS ONE IS NO TROUBLE AT ALL--BUT INCURABLE, I'M AFRAID. CATATONIC. COMPLETE WITHDRAWAL INTO THE SELF--BUT A SMILE ON HIS FACE NONTHELESS.
HIS NAME IS DAVID CARSON. YOU'LL HAVE TO TEND HIM, BUT THERAPY WILL BE UNNECESSARY. THERE'S NO HOPE!
OH, I DON'T KNOW, DOCTOR--A LITTLE CARE--AND LOVE--CAN WORK WONDERS SOMETIMES--!
28

FIRST NOTES

ANY PORT IN A STORM

I've always wanted to quote *The Fugs* on this page.

The Fugs, in case you're unfamiliar, was a terrorist folk/rock band of the 1960s. Its members spanned the era from the beatniks to the hippies; they were social commentators and poets, anarchists and weirdos. They weren't very good musicians, but they could cut to the heart of the matter like nobody's business.

Nearly twenty years ago, they recorded their second album for Warners/Reprise, *It Crawled into My Hand, Honest.* The original title was "The Fugs Eat It!" but Reprise didn't like that. On this particular album, there is a song entitled "Wide, Wide River" — a fun song that, due to its content, could not receive any airplay in the United States (although I once played it on a radio show in Windsor, Ontario). In the middle of the song, the Fugs make an important observation concerning presidential elections. I am paraphrasing it here:

"Isn't it interesting that in this nation — supposedly a democratic nation — we always wind up having to choose between the lesser of two evils. I mean, was George Washington the lesser of two evils? Sometimes I wonder."

I do not believe most people vote for president — I think they vote against the other guy. Most people who voted for Reagan in 1980 didn't vote *for* Reagan, they voted *against* Carter. The bird in the hand was sent out to the bush.

But faced with the choice of Reagan and Carter, most people simply did not vote at all. Of those who bothered to register, only 50% actually voted in the presidential contest. So Reagan wound up winning the approval of only something like 27% of the electorate.

I am not here to put down President Reagan or to ensorse Candidate Mondale for president, or vice versa. I don't think such endorsements are outside the domain of this page; I just don't feel like telling anybody how to vote.

But I do want to encourage you to go out there and vote — for somebody, even if he is the lesser of two evils. If you're extremely cynical and you cannot bring yourself to vote for president, vote for *vice-president* — if this is where you can find a clear choice, great. Maybe you'll get lucky and the president will resign or croak.

(Of course I'm extremely cynical — I just started off this editorial with a quote from The Fugs, didn't I?)

There's lots of good reasons why you should vote, but I'll just tell you one of them:

No matter what you think about the two candidates, no matter whether you vote or you don't, *one of these two guys is going to win.* As Jesse Jackson told the press after his victory in the Virginia Democratic primary, " 'None of the above' can't hold office." Personally, I think that's a real shame and I'd love to try it — but that's the system.

And since one of these two guys is going to win, that guy is going to wield a great deal of power. He is going to nominate Supreme Court justices, he is going to figure out some clever way to raise taxes that may or may not affect you (positively or negatively), he is going to influence legislation, sign legislation, and veto legislation. He could keep us out of war, he might have to respond to threats of war, he might even get us into a war. It's a heavy, terrible job that demands every last drop from the best mind in the nation.

Unfortunately, we're stuck with Reagan or Mondale. But *the job is the same* and all we've got is a choice between these two guys. And one of them is going to win.

Depressing, but true. It's sort of like a four year visit to the dentist.

As you've probably noticed from previous First Notes pages, I'm a great believer in the First Amendment — so I'm not going to say that if you don't vote, you really don't have the right to complain about the outcome. Of course you do.

Just don't do it in front of me.

— Mike Gold

FIRST COMICS IN OCTOBER!

American Flagg! #17: The plot thickens and things get real hot for Reuben north of the border. And down in the Chicago mayoral race, almost everybody's throwing his — and her — hat into the ring. **Howard Chaykin** provides the fun.

E-Man #22: Of course there's a superhero in Australia ... but are you ready for the coming of ... Captain Koala? **Joe Staton** and **Rick Burchett** unleash the most unexpected hero of them all!

Grimjack #7: **John Ostrander** and **Timothy Truman** present the conclusion to The Shadow Cops ... and **The Black Flame** drops into Munden's Bar, courtesy of **Peter Gillis** and **Don Lomax.**

Jon Sable, Freelance #21: An attempted murder and a beautiful fugitive bring out the bounty hunter in **Mike Grell's** hero: Widowmaker, an extremely deadly game of cat and mouse.

Starslayer #25: Torin returns to Cynosure to encounter a deadly villain he had already slain ... as the Black Flame's mortal friends take on the boogeymen — on their own turf!

Warp #19: At the end of the battle cosmic, who is left standing? **Peter Gillis** and **Mike Gustovich** put Lord Cumulus, Prince Chaos, Sargon and The Outrider through ... The Final Battle!